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State Regulation of
Public Utilities

August 3, 2005

Chief, Regulations & Procedures Division
Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau
Attn: Notice No. 41
P.O. Box 14412
Washington, DC 20044-4412

Dear Chief,

Most food packages, soft drink containers, over-the-counter drugs, and even dietary supplements provide shoppers with basic consumer information on the label. However, under your current regulations, most beer, wine and distilled spirits labels may not provide consumers with basic meaningful information as to what is in the product. Alcoholic beverages (with some exceptions) are the only major class of consumable goods that does not provide important information on the label, such as serving size, alcohol per serving, calories, fat and protein per serving, as well as allergens or ingredients.

Furthermore, existing label requirements for beer, wine and spirits are so different that they could cause consumer confusion. I believe that providing basic consumer information is necessary so that consumers may make informed choices about what, and how much, to drink. Caloric information per serving is important to anyone who is watching his or her diet. Alcohol per serving should be important to anyone trying to monitor his or her alcohol intake.

I would ask TTB to adopt a regulation that permits meaningful consumer-oriented serving facts on beer, wine and spirits labels. I also recommend that TTB allow manufacturers to voluntarily provide this kind of truthful, understandable information on labels while the rulemaking process proceeds.

With warmest regards, I remain

JHRJr/jgb

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JR", followed by the printed name "James H. Ritchie, Jr." in blue ink.